

Jens Psaki Press Conference

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Hi Everyone,

A few noteworthy things. Sullivan denied news media coverage saying that the White House thinks President Putin already decided to invade Ukraine. Despite this, today's press conference was a stark reiteration that the Biden administration believes an invasion could happen at any time, on a range of different scales, and that Russia is looking to fabricate a pretext. The evacuation of American diplomats in the American embassy in Kiev (24-48 hours) is also a sign of this, even though Press Secretary Jens Psaki mentioned this was the case in Afghanistan, Kazakhstan and Ethiopia in the last year. Embassy not to be fully closed.

VP Kamala Harris' participation at the upcoming Munich Security Conference was mentioned, questions as to why the president would not attend came up. Sullivan mentioned President Biden is continuously engaging with world leaders on the issues of international security, specifically Ukraine right now, proud that VP is going to MSC to reassure allies and voice stark need for unity.

Press Secretary Jens Psaki spoke about the discussion between President Biden and Prime Minister Trudeau today regarding the ongoing blockades, especially the one at the Ambassador Bridge between Detroit and Windsor, and that both agreed the individuals blocking those key arteries are having impacts on lives and livelihoods, and must be stopped quickly. The PM promised quick action, and thanked Americans for offering support. This is affecting communities, people's ability to get food on table and especially the auto industry. This effort has the potential to have a huge impact on the American public. There was even an apparent insinuation that this could lead to the American auto industry to attempt to be more independent from Canada. On reports of a similar convoy in DC, department of homeland security is ready to ensure no disruptions. They are deploying additional staff and working with local authorities to avoid having the same issues we are. Close touch with our Canadian counterparts. Other meeting with PM Trudeau and other European world leaders re situation in Ukraine was mentioned. Allies agreed it's a time for unity.

Thanks,

Jérémy

Full notes:

Jake Sullivan - United States National Security Advisor

Sullivan: Russia looking to find a pretext to invade Ukraine

Q: Does the U.S believe Putin has made a decision?

Sullivan: We do not know he had made a final decisions.

Q: Will Biden engage with President Putin?

Sullivan: Yes, I believe so.

Q: Need to underline evidence to Americans? Provide intelligence to the people like during the situation in Iraq.

Sullivan: Situation is very different, we are trying to prevent a war. We share all the information that we can share.

Q: Risk of World War? Will Biden speak to it?

Sullivan: President Biden has spoken about this many times. We are acting on the military mobilisation of over 100,000 Russian soldiers, and sharing all the information we can with the American public. Yes, they could invade at any moment.

Q: Next week Harris going to MSC, why is Biden not going? Brazilian president meeting with Putin.

Sullivan: Biden doing everything to meet with allies, and offer Russia ways out of this conflict diplomatically, proud that VP is going to MSC. Brazilian is free to conduct his own diplomacy.

Q: Possibility of assault on Ukraine, possibility of taking entire country or parts?

Sullivan: Coordinating with Ukraine, we will continue doing so and being transparent about the significant risk of military action on Ukraine. Can't predict the scope of the military action, could be more limited or expanded. Possibly a significant amount of territory.

Q: Did the U.S wait too long to arm Ukraine, and to move U.S troops? Pre-invasion sanctions?

Sullivan: Over the course of the past year, \$650 million to Ukraine for defence under Joe Biden, more than any other administration. Defensive equipment mainly. Deployment of troops, 80,000 troops in Europe, air squadrons to the Baltics, carrier in the Mediterranean Sea, reassuring our NATO allies who are also contributing. President believes sanctions are meant to deter, if Putin moves costs will be imposed. West needs to be strong and united, sanctions in lock steps with our allies, like Canada.

Q: Sudden meeting last night, sharper rhetoric about the invasion. Did something change?

Sullivan: For some time now, we've been talking about any day military action could be taken any day. We can't predict Putin's determination. The possibility of action in a near time frame is backed up by our view on the ground and acquired information.

Q: Why would Russia risk provoking China by engaging during the Olympics? Concerned about Beijing siding with Russia?

Sullivan: China has their own decisions to make. Lots of consequences possible for China. China could not compensate Russia in the event of an invasion. U.S.A under Biden has trust in us and our allies. We have innovation and freedom.

Jens Psaki – Press Secretary

Q: What should we expect this weekend?

Psaki: President spoke with European counterparts and PM Trudeau. Discussed the key blockades in Canada. Individuals blocking those arteries are having impacts on lives and livelihoods. PM promised quick action. Thanked the President. This weekend, President will be at Camp David, decisions on who he will engage with on day by day basis.

Q: Diplomats being moved out of Ukraine, going where?

Psaki: Not sure, they typically would return to home base.

Q: Current assessment of exercises in the Black Sea by Russians?

Psaki: Ongoing escalatory actions, preparing for a range of steps Putin is taking.

Q: U.S shares information with Ukraine? Downplaying risk of war?

Psaki: Engaged closely with Ukraine, sharing all information possible with American people. We alongside our allies gave stark warnings to Russia should they invade.

Q: If we don't know Putin has made his mind, why do we want American diplomats out of Ukraine in 24 to 48 hours?

Psaki: If Putin makes that decision, we want to protect our diplomats. Important risk to any civilians.

Q: Second time we urged Americans out of a country, what does that mean?

Psaki: Not second time, Kazakhstan, Ethiopia, always safety first.

Q: President talking about getting out of Afghanistan, what should we say to those who say foreign approach of this administration is bad?

Psaki: Biden ended a failed war in Afghanistan, situation is different, we are trying to prevent a war.

Q: Rulling out the president will meet with his candidates this weekend?

Psaki: Could be as early as next week.

Q: Concerns about Russia, affects the timetable on the pick for Supreme Court Judge?

Psaki: Remain on track for this.

Q: Inflation, president said administration will try to bring prices down, what is the strategy?

Psaki: 1. Economist predict inflation will come down, President supports the treasury on this. Core costs for American people, Build back better, negotiating price of prescription drugs and childcare. Address supply chains, press for competitiveness, cars here in the United States.

Q: Reducing the size of Kiev embassy, but not closing?

Psaki: Can check with State dep.

Q: Reporting that Trump is in touch with Kim Jong Hun?

Psaki: Trump is not the President anymore

Q: Blockade, what is the U.S doing? Government preparing for similar types of demonstrations?

Psaki: President spoke with PM Trudeau, in touch with Canadian counterparts, address challenges to supply chains. Affecting communities and people, ability to get food on table and auto parts. This effort has the potential to have a huge impact on the American public. On reports of a similar convoy in DC, department of homeland security ready to ensure no disruptions. Deploying additional staff and working with local authorities. Close touch with our Canadian counterparts.

Q: Is it still accurate to say North Korea did not follow up with us?

Psaki: Nothing to say

Q: Interviews with Supreme Court members could start next week, how long will the process last?

Psaki: Interview process for the president happens late in the process.

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